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## BULLETIN

FEBRUARY, 1945

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### Acknowledgment:

*This first hand report of the establishment and administration of child endowment in Australia provides an up-to-date account of the world's most substantial experience in thus assuring each child some economic recognition of his essentiality. Canada, on July 1, 1945, will begin to provide family allowances under a different pattern than that followed by Australia. The Child Welfare League of America is indebted to the Director-General of Social Services in Australia for responding to its request and contributing this manuscript which provides a background for our future study of this basic provision for child welfare.*

HOWARD W. HOPKIRK

## Child Endowment in Australia

FRANCIS H. ROWE

Director-General of Social Services in Australia

### Australia's Family Allowances

The need for a system of family allowances in Australia had long been recognized. The Commonwealth Government had appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the question in 1928. The report of that Commission was that the majority of members were not then prepared to recommend the introduction of child endowment, although the Leader of the Opposition (John Curtin, now Australian Prime Minister) associated himself strongly with the minority who favored the immediate introduction of the scheme.

Later the Commonwealth Government had the benefit of the advice of the New South Wales Government, which was then operating a child endowment scheme designed to augment the lower rates of the basic wage\* fixed by the Arbitration Court. The question of child endowment was frequently raised in debates on taxation and the budget by members of

the Australian Labor Party until the end of 1940, when a parliamentary select committee was appointed to report on an endowment scheme. The Bill introduced by Mr. Holt was based on the findings of this committee.

On March 27, 1941, Harold Edward Holt, Minister for Labor and National Service in the second Menzies Government (a conservative administration) introduced to the Federal House of Representatives a bill "to provide for the payment of endowments, in respect of certain children, at the rate of five shillings per week for each child." The measure was supported by all Parties in the Parliament and the Child Endowment Act, 1941-42, came into operation on April 7, 1941.

Endowments became payable from July 1, 1941. The object of the Act was to provide for the maintenance, training and advancement of the children to whom endowment was granted.

In Australia during the twelve months ending June, 1944, the sum of £12,256,976 (over \$49,000,000 at the current rate of exchange) was paid to 921,973 children under the age of 16 in the form of child endowment.

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\*The wage fixed by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court as the highest minimum wage that industry can afford to pay. Currently, it is £4/16/- a week.

### Requirements for Receiving Child Endowment

The Act passed in 1941 provided endowment at the rate of 5/- a week for all children, including ex-nuptial children, under the age of 16 years but excluding the first child in each family. Payments were made irrespective of the means, occupation or social condition of parents. The scheme is noteworthy for this absence of a means test.

The first child in each family was excluded from the endowment scheme because of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court's argument that the basic wage family should be assured of adequate nutrition, but that nutrition and clothing became matters of concern as the number of children increased.

The Act stipulated that payments should be made direct to mothers, except in special cases. For the purposes of the Act, the term "mother" includes a step-mother or foster-mother, or the wife of a person maintaining a legally adopted child. In certain circumstances, payments may be made to a father, or guardian, or an approved institution.

Children of war pensioners came within the scope of the scheme, as did children residing in private charitable institutions, and children boarded out by the State but *not* in institutions wholly or mainly supported by State Funds.

The Act laid down that aboriginal children were to receive the same treatment as white children in comparable circumstances and that British subjects coming from overseas could claim endowment after twelve months' residence.

Experience in the administration of the Act showed the necessity for amending legislation. From June 30, 1942, Government charitable institutions approved by the Minister for Social Services became entitled to endowment under conditions hitherto enjoyed only by private charitable institutions, except where the cost of the child's maintenance was met wholly or mainly by the parent or guardian.

Provisions relating to aboriginal natives were varied to allow payment of endowment to children supervised and assisted by, even if not wholly maintained by, aboriginal missions during not less than six months in any year.

To ensure an equitable distribution of endowment in the case of divided families, variations were made in the principles laid down for determining the recipient. These enabled the Child Endowment Commissioner to decide to whom and in what proportion endowment should be paid to children who were not living with their parents as one family. Provision was

made for endowment where children were maintained out of a decedent's estate.

Endowment is not payable to children in State hospitals for the insane; or to children whose fathers are aliens, unless the child was born in Australia or has been resident in Australia for 12 months immediately preceding the date of the claim.

Before endowment is granted, a claim must be sent to the Deputy Commissioner of Child Endowment in the capital city of the State in which payment is desired. When another child is born to an endowee, an additional claim must be forwarded within three months after the date of birth; then endowment begins from the birth date. If lodgment of the claim is delayed beyond three months, payment is made only from the beginning of the endowment period in which the claim is received.

### Methods of Payment and Financing

Payment is made by three methods:

- (a) In cash each four weeks at a bank or post office nominated by the endowee.
- (b) Every 12 weeks to the credit of a bank account nominated by the endowee.
- (c) By cheque.

For cash payments, booklets of Child Endowment Orders were specially designed. Normally these booklets provide for 13 payments, each order being removed by the paying officer upon presentation and retained in exchange for cash.

Funds for the child endowment scheme are provided by a tax on all payrolls at the rate of 2½% on amounts exceeding £20 a week. This tax is paid by employers and last year yielded approximately £9,000,000. Further financing is obtained by a reduction of the income tax concessional allowance formerly provided for taxpayers with children under 16. The reduction of this concessional allowance results in a gain to revenue of approximately £2,000,000 a year. Broadly, the reduction in the concessional allowance is based on the view that the taxpayer receiving child endowment should not obtain a concessional allowance for those children to whom child endowment is paid. Any balance required to finance the scheme is drawn from general revenue.

Attempts are still being made to have endowment paid to all children in the family, including the first. But calculations show this would involve another £11,000,000 (35,000,000 dollars) a year and, as the present basic wage still contemplates a family unit of three, the increased expenditure is considered unwar-rantable.

### Results

When the child endowment scheme was first put into operation, many people who supported it in principle questioned the wisdom of introducing a comprehensive social reform of this kind while the country was fighting desperately to maintain its security and nationhood. But the Australian Government decided that child endowment could rightly be considered a profitable national investment.

Consequent upon its introduction, there has been some reduction in mortality among children and an improvement in their health and happiness. It is not claimed that the scheme has had any spectacular effect on the birth rate, but to the extent that it relieves the economic pressure on parents of large families, its tendency must be in the direction of improving the rate.

From a survey, admittedly incomplete, it appears that the majority of recipients make good use of child endowment and apply it for the purpose for which it is intended. Many expressions of gratitude have been received and the increased family allowance seems to have enabled many mothers to buy nourishing food with a resultant improvement in the health of their children.

A Child Welfare officer, who has cared for some 450 orphans and for destitute boys in four homes, said that child endowment assistance had helped to provide better food and clothing for his charges. Through the grant they have become healthier, happier citizens.

The secretary of a children's protection society considers the endowment of inestimable value and states that, while the credit cannot be ascribed entirely to this assistance, there has been a marked improvement in the health of children attending day nurseries under the society's control.

Comments made by the Western Australian Commissioner of Native Affairs show that endowment grants have undeniably benefited aboriginals. He says:

"Whilst it is obvious to me that generally speaking the native children are better dressed and in better health because of pay-

ment of child endowment, there have been correspondingly good features arising from payments to endowees. Until recently there was a good deal of simple mating between detribalized parents but now there is a definite tendency towards the social question of marriage and noticeably, too, there is more desire for the education of native children."

### Administration

Administration of the Child Endowment Act is in the hands of the Commonwealth Department of Social Services. This Department was established on April 26, 1931, but did not function fully as a separate organization until April 1941, when the administration of the Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act and the Maternity Allowance Act was taken over from the Department of the Treasury.

A Central Secretariat, established at Canberra under the control of Director-General Frank H. Rowe, deals with all matters of policy, legislation, finance, statistics, staff and general administration. Deputy Commissioners, whose offices are in the State capitals, deal with claims from within their States for the various benefits under different Acts and Instructions.

In addition to administering Acts relating to the welfare of various classes of persons in the community, the Department is responsible for handling certain war relief measures. Activities under its control are:

- Invalid and old-age pensions and funeral benefits for pensioners.
- Maternity allowances.
- Widows' pensions.
- Child endowment.
- Vocational training of invalid pensioners.
- Civilian war injuries compensation.
- Civil defense workers' compensation.
- Civil constructional corps compensation.
- Reception and after-care of evacuees.
- Payments to soldiers discharged for non-war disabilities.
- Payments to persons unemployed as a result of Government restrictions on non-essential industry.

The Commonwealth began to pay child endowment on July 1, 1941. Claims and payments since then are shown in the following table:

	Approved				Total number of endowed children	Total amount paid to endowees and approved institutions
	Endowed Families	Institutions				
	Number of families	Number of children endowed	Number of Inst.	Number of children endowed		
TO						
June 30, 1942	487,674	895,558	246	14,289	909,847	£11,302,863
June 30, 1943	491,121	891,221	315	16,938	908,159	11,659,626
June 30, 1944	503,140	903,577	321	18,396	921,973	12,256,976



## There is a Time in the Affairs of Children . . .

ELEANOR W. GORDON, *Administrative Assistant*

Child Placing and Adoption Committee, State Charities Aid Association, New York City

*"There is a tide in the affairs of men  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries."*

—Shakespeare

### The Social Worker's Imagination May Lead "On to Fortune"

When a child, temporarily or permanently out of his own home, comes under the care of a social agency he needs the services of a well trained worker who also can see unusual needs of children and is interested in finding unusual ways of meeting them. Such a worker can be most to each child by seeking out those adults to whom he may relate himself most successfully in finding his way toward self respect, self determination and respect for others. These are essential bases for normal human relationships through which he may later find his poised and balanced place in the community of which he is a part. This for him is "fortune."

### Accepting the Risk in Planning for Children

Adults as well as children often have greater potentialities than they know until something calls these potentialities into play. Their surprise is shown when they say "I did not know I could do that." All of life is full of risk and uncertainty, no matter how secure we try to make it. The adult who freely faces the risk of sharing life with a child probably has a better chance of forming a happy relationship than the adult who tries to protect himself from the risk of failure and disappointment. There are always many known quantities about which families may be reassured from general agency experience but the unknowns are always greater than the knowns and risks have to be taken anyway as there is no way of predicting how any two human beings will continue to feel about each other in sharing living experience. When too much security and attempt at guarantee is sought by a family it probably means that they see life in terms of success and failure rather than in terms of fluid experience in which learning and growth are always possible whether experience is "good" or "bad." They are likely to have difficulty with children when the stresses and strains of adolescence appear. If workers themselves accept the

risk of living and do not have to be too protective they will find it easier to help children move forward through things that are hard to do. It will also mean they have more courage to ask for what the children need and to help the adult to an awareness of his capacity for meeting those needs. Workers may not always realize that in saying "no" to a new risk for a child they may be saying "yes" to a far greater risk involved in the plan already in operation. Any plan means a "yes" and a "no" at the same time. We need to look both ways at once to be sure we know the full responsibility we are taking and not blind ourselves to the less obvious half for which we may feel no responsibility particularly if it was not of our making.

### We Must Ask for What the Children Need

A special responsibility falls on workers to find more and new types of relationship for children and adults supplementing boarding, institutional and adoptive care. A worker who clearly defines the kind of relationship that may meet a particular child's needs is on the way toward finding it. She knows that many families who want children have some general idea of what they want but as their interest and capacity are explored with the case worker they may discover that something quite different is more suitable. The worker who is not afraid of her power but is willing to use her strength can suggest ideas which families are free to accept or just as free to reject. The client who says "I never thought of that" is receptive to new ideas and is usually self determining enough to know to what extent he may choose to modify his original thinking. The range of adaptability of people is not always allowed for but needs to be taken into account when workers are looking for special opportunities for children. Almost never would a family ask for the unusual thing because they would have no way knowing about it as the need springs from a child they do not know. Of necessity she is the interpreter for the children. She can talk

with a client in such a way that she does not interfere with his freedom in any way. She does not want anyone to feel an over stimulated or artificial interest. She knows that what she is looking for is not easy to find nor easy to do and she does not want anyone to think he is interested only to find the interest lost when she begins to work out the plan. She would rather take her losses in the beginning and move more surely toward her goal.

### **We have Trained Families to Expect Too Much**

In recent years adoption has been more clearly defined and with that definition has grown a tendency to limit adoption to infants and young children. Agencies have been under the pressure of their own standards to take as little risk as possible and it has been much easier to predict success and give assurances when planning for infants and young children. While many families prefer to take infants others have a wider range of acceptance and can be happy with any child who fits in and seems to belong regardless of age. Through publicity and special articles of recent years families have learned what good standards of work are and come to agencies now expecting to find that everything that needs to be done for the child will have been done by the agency and any child they may take will be in very good condition and ready for placement. When the agency does all the preparing perhaps it is taking away from families the very experiences that more quickly build the parent child relationship. Families have been known to say they wished they had had the care of their child earlier even though it meant their giving special care instead of the agency. When the agency protects a family from taking the responsibility they are capable of assuming, their lesser response is called for rather than their greater more adequate response. We have led families to expect this standard of service so that now they do expect it. Many of these same families in response to a different interpretation might surprise themselves and the agencies by their willingness and capacity to take responsibility.

### **Free Home Placement for Older Children**

Because of this tendency to restrict permanent placement to adoption of infants and young children where the outcome may be more easily predicted older children from five or six up are having less consideration than they should have. We know so much more about the risk of change for these children that we are fearful of subjecting them to a plan that may not work. Many families and children cannot accept the commitments that have to be made so early in the plan when a child is taken for adoption.

For them the free home offers more freedom as this kind of plan may be set up with very little commitment on either side. It can be given a chance to become what it really is as the family and child have opportunity to develop the feeling that grows naturally and they find what they want in each other. In such cases the agency has to be prepared to change or modify its role in response to changing needs. Sometimes there will be little need for service and then suddenly the agency may have to assume a real responsibility in standing by and sustaining a plan during a crisis or at a time when the family and child need help while they take time to grow enough to take on again their full responsibility. In the cases that follow, Peggy's case illustrates the need of the agency in a crisis. There are times in this kind of planning when the agency may even have to take the child back for a time and then working with both family and child try to hold the relationship if it has enough vitality to indicate this. This kind of planning is not thought of often enough to meet the needs of the children who might in this way become really important for themselves in a family relationship. Until we think more about this kind of planning we will have no way of knowing what reservoir of interest on the part of many families in doing this kind of thing. We know from past experience how well the general public responds when needs are clearly defined and help is asked. We know that in this country there is unusual concern for children and we are pretty sure we can have what they need if we are fearless in asking for it. The following cases are suggestive.

### **The Odds were Against Using This Home**

The Fays, a couple in moderate circumstances in their forties had brought up a child of their own successfully and later had taken a little girl from an agency. This child proved to be so difficult that the Fays brought her back. The Fays were not discouraged and persisted in their attempt to find another child. Mrs. Fay's letters created an unfavorable impression as they were very hard to read and because her thoughts ran ahead of her words they sounded almost incoherent. This impression in conjunction with the failure of the first plan practically ruled out the thought of using the home. Mrs. Fay persisted in making an issue of the question so she was seen by a different worker who was predisposed to close the home definitely. However in talking with Mrs. Fay she began to have growing confidence in her as a mother. She talked seriously of the interests she and Mr. Fay had in the simple real things of life and their conviction that they had a great deal to give a child while at the same time they were not demanding. She expressed a wholesome attitude toward her son and his wife and recognized that their life could not be absorbed by Mr. and Mrs. Fay. As she had been regarded as a weak person the question of firmness was raised and her ability to be strong under the demands of a child. Mrs. Fay was very comfortable in this interview and was able to reveal strength and conviction that evidently had not appeared before. As the Fays were interested in a little girl up to ten it seemed worth while to see if there was some child whose present situation had as much or more risk in it than that involved in using the Fay home. Here at least would be permanence with love and affection.

### The Odds were Against Placing Peggy

No one really wanted Peggy. She was nearly ten. Her personal habits and general makeup had never seemed promising enough to determine adoption. Her intelligence was just average and no one thought her pretty. She had had a succession of boarding homes as she wore one out almost every two years. However in going over her record the worker thought the combination worth exploring and talked with Peggy's worker. She had real doubt that Peggy could accept such a plan but as she was faced with the necessity of moving Peggy soon anyway, she decided this was worth trying. Peggy went to the office to meet the placement worker who had invited her to go to lunch. Peggy's acceptance of this new person and her ability to move into this experience with ease once her confidence was won convinced the worker that Peggy probably could carry her part of the procedure of placement if it continued to seem indicated. The worker found Peggy a pleasant, responsive little girl and one in whom she thought the Fays would be interested.

### The Fays and Peggy Find Each Other

The Fays were told about Peggy and were so interested that they invited her to spend a weekend with them. Peggy was delighted to have another invitation and when she met Mrs. Fay at the office was happy to go for the visit. The long weekend was so successful that the Fays and Peggy wanted to try being a family. Now suddenly Peggy who had not been important for herself became very important. The Fays thought she was pretty and attractive. During the visit she had been very comfortable with the Fays and had not exhibited her unattractive habits. They saw her with different eyes because they were just an individual family wanting a little girl who did not have to be remarkable or beautiful to meet their needs. Carrying out the plan was unexpectedly delayed by unforeseen details that had to be taken care of. Peggy's worker sustained her thru the waiting period and the placement worker sustained the Fays until the day came when Peggy could come to them with the idea of staying if she as well as the Fays were happy in the arrangement.

### The Agency Has to Stand by in a Sustaining Role

After placement things went very well for a number of months. The Fays felt very adequate themselves and had no feeling of need for any help. Mrs. Fay often spoke of their great happiness in having Peggy who was growing and getting more attractive and happier all the time. However, suddenly a crisis came when Peggy needed an emergency operation which later proved to be complicated by a serious illness. Hospitalization had to be immediate. Mrs. Fay was scared and afraid of the expense involved and suddenly Peggy was the agency's child again. Nevertheless she kept assuring Peggy that she would be going home and not to a hospital. The Fays had had three or four serious things of major importance happen during the preceding few weeks and Mrs. Fay felt she had taken all she could and said so. As Mr. Fay was away during most of this time Mrs. Fay was alone in a difficult situation in which normally she would have been able to turn to him for the real support he always gives her. For a little while she became quite thoroughly inadequate and all the doubts felt by other staff members seemed to be justified. When Mrs. Fay found that the agency was really standing by and sustaining her she recovered her poise and assumed again her role of mother to

Peggy. Although Mrs. Fay had been so inadequate Peggy's confidence in her mother was not undermined and when in the hospital her one concern was to see her mother and father and to know when she could go home.

A few days after the emergency the worker talked with Mrs. Fay about the way she had acted and how she had made it harder for Peggy when she had told her she could go home although she knew it was not so. She had thought this would make it easier for Peggy. She was responsive and later showed what she had assimilated from it, when Peggy was trying to force her into making the same kind of promise she had made formerly. Mrs. Fay was able to say to Peggy that the doctor would have to tell her when she could go home. The worker was encouraged by this demonstration of growth which tended to confirm her original conviction that the home should be used. There may be other points at which Mrs. Fay will need sustaining help but she feels herself fully adequate to the situation and Peggy agrees!

This home offers so much for Peggy that it is important for the agency to be willing to take its share when indicated instead of requiring the Fays to be something they can't quite measure up to. There is a kind of "slack" in some combinations of families and children which agencies can "take up" and in so doing help them to work when otherwise they might break down. This child and family could never have found each other if a worker had not seen their potentialities and accepted them with their limitations which were ruling them all out of consideration for planning by workers who knew the family and child.

### This Beginning had an Unforeseen Ending

Jack was fifteen and quite happily settled in his boarding home. His mental rating was superior and he was capable of using cultural opportunities not offered in his boarding home. Because of his superior intelligence something more was needed for him and when a man known to the agency expressed an interest in being a friend to a boy, Jack was told about it. They met and liked each other and started going to ball games on Saturdays. It seemed natural for Jack to go home with him after the games and gradually he became accustomed to spending his weekends with the family. When summer came it seemed natural for all of them to plan for the vacation together. Then in the fall they suggested sending him to a good boarding school and wanted him to spend vacations with them.

All this evolved naturally without any commitments on either side. Later the family sent him to college where he graduated with a good record. He was well prepared for his part in the present war when the time came. As time went on the family would have been glad to adopt him but this was never important to him. The relationship was most important however.



### Warren Might Never have Realized His Capacity for Living

When Warren was nine it seemed as if life had little to offer him. He was a foundling and never had had any one interested in him for his own sake alone. He was always the less favored child in his boarding home. He had been seriously handicapped physically by arthritis and adoption had never been suggested.

However he came to the attention of a worker in a placement agency who had the kind of imagination to see the potentiality of this child. From any family's point of view it looked like a great risk but the worker knew her job was to find for each child what that child needed and this child needed a family who wanted him for himself.

When the family was found they were frankly told the physical history and risks and advised that the agency would continue to share responsibility if they were interested in taking Warren. There was to be no legal adoption but rather the home was to be set up as a free home. In doing this Warren could call them mother and father and use their name.

A child of nine does not fit into a home without many adjustments and some of Warren's adjustment was quite difficult but a real feeling grew to such an extent that after a year and a half, during which time there was no return of the arthritis, the family and child could not be satisfied unless legal adoption took place and it was finally agreed to by the agency. The appearance of this child changed remarkably after he had found his place in a family that would always be his. The day the adoption was completed he went to his mother that evening and putting his arms around her said, "You will never know what it means to be all yours."

### Children Cannot Ask Directly for What They Need

Children cannot express their needs and desires as clearly or directly as adults can. A child is almost entirely dependent on the understanding, interest and imagination of the worker for the conception and carrying out of plans for him as she is the true guardian of his interests while he is her responsibility and she alone must determine the service and opportunities that will give his life its greatest value. But the worker who knows children well does not need to be told these things in words as she uses all the means at her disposal to interpret the indications children give her of their needs. Neither Peggy nor Warren could have asked for what was found for them. Each one needed a worker who could see the possibility of planning. The worker must be ready to think of a child in response to a family's interest not because she wants to serve the family but because she knows that the family wanting a child and the child needing that family are the two halves of a very important whole. If she keeps her primary function of serving the child clearly in mind it does not matter on which

side the movement toward placement is initiated. A good idea may come in a moment of time almost like a revelation and the worker may wonder why it never occurred to her before. Other things may be more laboriously thought out but in either case once the plan is conceived it may be subjected to all the critical thinking necessary.

### Children Can "Take It"

If the worker knows the strength of children and is unafraid for them she can give them the support they need when facing new and hard experience. Those who know children well know that they rise to the challenge of doing what is hard and if given a choice of doing the easy thing or the hard thing within the range of their capacity will usually choose the hard thing with a sense of expansion of their potentialities. They like to know that an adult has enough confidence in them to ask them to do hard things. They like to identify with the adult and it is one of the things that helps them realize themselves more fully and so is useful in their growth and development. Children can learn to take life as experience, when helped to understand that that is what life is, rather than a fairy tale pursuit of happiness that tends to evaluate life in terms of success and failure. From this point of view whatever happens may have a constructive or progressive value.

### Children and Adults Need Each Other

Adults need children just as much as children need adults but in a different way. Adults are isolated from much of living if they are not related to children or young people in such a way as to know what they are thinking and what is important to them. It is the young people who lead the way into the new generation through which life is ever changing. The bridge between the two generations consists of relationships great or small that exist between adults and children. It may be parenthood, it may be teacher and pupil, scout leader and his troop, it may be deep friendship or even more casual contacts as long as they have mutual respect and understanding. The thing that is most important however is that the relationship is wanted on both sides. The demands made in relationships between adults and children are quite different from those between children of similar age groups and it is important for children to experience this difference. As people grow older we see the tendency to get more fixed in many respects and the demands of the younger generation do more than anything else perhaps to shake adults loose a bit and help them keep step with the times. It is not too bad for adults to be

(Continued on page 15)

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## BULLETIN

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Henrietta L. Gordon, *Editor*

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### Did Sixteen Babies Have to Perish?

No one wanted them to burn to death, the 16 babies and pre-school children who died at Auburn, Maine, on January 31, when the house in which they were sleeping was destroyed by fire. Yet they may be deemed casualties we have failed to prevent on the home front, where so much remains to be done to make the United States a place fit for all its children. Today many are in situations as hazardous as that which permitted this burning, thousands of children who will survive the war without a fiery death but who will be seared by neglect.

The Auburn disaster might have happened in any large community due to the inadequacy of most of the facilities for the care of the children of workers. An institution, as such a boarding establishment should be classified, when hit by fire may be compared to a ship burning at sea. Children, especially babies, will burn to death before fire fighting forces arrive and before workers are fully awake. Consequently a staff of one worker to two or three babies is provided in the best of those institutions which still try to meet the needs of infants within an institution. A staff of such proportions allows at least one worker to be on duty all night.

Some institutions have an even smaller proportion of workers than is reported to have been in residence at the La Coste place in Auburn, where the number apparently was four women and 21 children. This is especially true of shelters operated for profit where as many as 8 or 10 little children may be found under the care of one woman. The scarcity of foster homes in wartime is one of the obvious reasons for an alarming increase in the number of commercial child care facilities.

The campaign for foster homes in your community may never have been organized. Maybe it was only a special effort lasting for a few weeks, whereas it should be a continuing program of interpretation lasting throughout the war and long into the peace, adding the press and radio to the home finder's resources. Or has your community tolerated the inadequate rates of board which still make the boarding of children in foster homes impractical under the high cost of living and other economic pressures of wartime? Has foster mothering been considered the essential activity which it is?

It will be interesting to know how many of the children who died at Auburn were the sons or daughters of service men. Such tragedies leave something to be desired on the home front. Wives of service men increasingly are compelled to rely upon the cheapest available nursery care while they are at work. These deaths at Auburn doubtless testify to four serious and widely prevalent hazards to child welfare: (1) the demand for women workers on night shifts, (2) small incomes of the families of service men, (3) the need for more foster homes, which have been proved the best facility for the care of infants, and (4) the failure of the country to budget enough for child welfare and thus assure the care needed in foster family homes and well staffed institutions.

The need for foster homes and for additional funds for foster care is being recognized wherever the community has deep concern for the welfare of its children. Agencies within the League's membership, in strong points throughout the country, have increased rates of board for children in foster homes and have provided more for the salaries of workers in institutions and of the social workers who find foster homes and supervise them. It is in New England that we have had recent and encouraging evidence of a corporate conscience giving just such attention to the needs of children. In contrast to the Auburn, Maine situation is the improvement one year ago in the service of the Connecticut Children's Aid Society which was reported in the January issue of this Bulletin in an article entitled, "Board Rate for Babies" by C. Rollin Zane. Finding foster homes for babies extremely scarce at a rate of \$6 weekly this society advanced the rate to \$10 with results which were both surprising and gratifying. America cannot have child welfare consistent with its ideals unless it is ready to spend far more than it ever has budgeted in behalf of its children.

—HOWARD W. HOPKIRK



### Interpreter's Column

*The contributors to this column are invited guest writers who have had experience in interpreting various aspects of social work, and in promoting sound public relations.*

#### "ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE"

It may be unorthodox to look to radio's "Hit Parade" for inspiration in doing public relations for social work, but that is what I propose to do. Current among the hit tunes is one—a popularized version of a negro spiritual—which offers a ready-made credo for public-relations-minded agency people. Its title "Accentuate the Positive."

The lyric goes on to suggest that you "Eliminate the Negative" which, too, is advice of the soundest order.

Any agency could profitably apply these two dicta to its relationships with the public. It has always seemed to me that our approach to public relations has been back-end-to, with too much emphasis on trying to tell the public what we do and how we do it and not nearly enough on the little day-by-day contacts with the public which determine to a large extent the public's attitude toward us. We tend to forget that this public we talk about so glibly is not a bit intangible mass upon which we are trying to make an impression, but rather consists of individual persons not the least of whom are our clients and our foster parents and their families and the staffs of other agencies with which we work. Do they like us or do they think we are a stuffy lot? How do we treat them in the course of our daily contacts?

A simple illustration occurs to me; the girl at the agency switchboard. She has scores or perhaps hundreds of contacts with the public each day. Are those contacts doing the agency any good or are they negative? A prominent lay person once said to me, "I like to call your agency because the operator has such a friendly voice. It's the only agency in town that makes me feel my call is welcome." Unimportant, you say? I don't think so. Contrast that with another agency where the operator is most impersonal and where you are switched to a secretary before you reach the person called. The result is irritation and irritation is bad public relations. Eliminate the negative.

Let's consider another small thing—agency letter-heads. I have seen hundreds of them from children's agencies and I suppose that 95% of them leave me cold, or with a negative impression. A little planning of design, a bit of color, a touch of imagination and

they achieve a warmth and friendliness that is much more consistent with an agency concerned with the welfare of children. And hundreds of your public who see your agency only through its letterhead are impressed with its spirit as conveyed by a piece of paper.

This is true, too, of your monthly bulletins or publications. As editor of one, I used to see a lot of the others and they were uniformly unsuccessful in conveying the personality of the agency to me, as a reader. While the copy was often interesting, it was submerged in unattractive layout and print. Child welfare is one of the most positive things in the world. Accentuate the positive.

It would be a most enlightening experience for an agency executive to walk into his agency some morning as a perfect stranger—as a prospective adoptive parent or foster parent—and to subject himself to the same reception accorded the public. What impression would he have of how his staff is fulfilling its most important public relations function—meeting the public? How would the receptionist measure up—and the intake worker? How would the appearance of the office impress him—because that is public relations, too!

The beauty of this course of treatment that I am suggesting is, of course, that it costs nothing. It utilizes tools which already exist in every agency. Everything that I have mentioned can be accomplished without putting a strain on an already overburdened budget. But it must be done deliberately and intentionally. It cannot be taken for granted. It is not being done at present in most agencies. If you will accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative, yours, too, can be the most popular agency in town.

—BERNARD A. ROLOFF, *Director of Public Relations, United War Fund and Community Fund, Pittsburgh, Pa.*

### Day Care—An Essential in Peacetime

DEAR EDITOR:

The essential nature of day care services for children has been confused by the wartime emphasis on day care as a device for getting women into industry. This point of view still persists in many spots, in spite of repeated demonstrations that drives for women in industry do not reflect in increased day care demands, nor have certain recent cutbacks in industry decreased appreciably the requests for day care service; resources remain crowded with waiting lists in many places. The focus on the

employed mother has obscured also the fact that day care offers a service to children which fills a long felt need in our total community services. Before the war few communities had adequate day nursery facilities, either in quantity or in quality and the use of such facilities as there were was limited largely to the socially and economically underprivileged. Community services in general were geared primarily to helping parents and children in their own homes; or if tensions were too great, and the children's welfare in peril, to placement outside the home. There was no halfway measure such as day care affords.

Through day care the mother who works, or who needs relief from the child's care during the day, can conserve her resources as a mother for such hours as her child is with her, while she is assured that he has good, consistent care during those hours he is away from her. Skilled case work service makes it possible for parents to use the day care service for the child, and so affords them the opportunity to meet or solve some of their problems, with better child care relationship as a result.

Recent articles have stressed the basic difference between all-day care and educational nursery schools. Whatever may be education's response to the need for pre-school education for three- and four-year-olds under our public school system, this has no relationship to the need for all-day care of children while the mother is absent from the home because of employment, illness, or other reasons. Day care provides substitute parental care which involves the elements of separation from the parent and a sharing of responsibility. (Unfortunately the parent frequently finds it difficult to accept this sharing and therefore influences the child's ability to accept it.)

A day care program should permit the use of its services to relieve tensions in the family relationships. Such care in long-time community planning is a social service and should be based on the needs of the mothers and children it serves. Eligibility for such care should not be conditioned solely by the employment of the mother, although employed mothers will probably remain the largest group served. Day care may be the best resource at times of illness, confinement, of temporary absence of the mother, providing, of course, that there is a responsible adult in the group.

Neither should we confine day care service to those who can pay a certain fixed fee. Services should be available on a sliding scale, running from a fee determined to be the cost of care down to a small nominal charge where incomes are very small. Con-

trary to the widely accepted principle, I feel that day care should not be given without some charge. Making a payment seems to me to be important psychologically to both parent and child, in that it establishes the relationship of care and provision by the parent. Even where the parent is being helped by an agency, I think it wiser to make an allowance in the budget for the day care, and have the parent make a payment to the nursery.

Day care is something quite different from the child placement. We find that parents using day care, whether in a group or a family, are not those who want full-time placement; nor can day care be substituted for placement where the latter is what the parent needs for himself and for the child. Usually the parent is not undecided as to whether to put his child in full-time care or day care, but is rather trying to find out whether day care will offer him a solution to his particular family situation. We believe, further, that any service can be best used if it is clearly defined for the community; day care assumes its clearest definition when it is not associated with a variety of other services. A day care service should be distinguished clearly from the full-time placement or other services of the agency.

A day care service should be a part of the constituted children's services. It should offer both group care in nurseries, and day care in a family for children too young for groups or children with special needs who require individual care. In many urban communities we might have both public and private day care services, as we have public and private family and children's agencies. In most communities, day care service would seem to find its logical place as a part of the county child welfare services, receiving state and federal grants as do other children's services. Our experience gives us a preference for a separate agency. If this is not possible, the service should be a distinct department of the agency.

We have found in day care an effective and needed community service. In the hands of experienced case workers who understand the meaning of partial separations for parents and children and who are aware of what is involved for those charged with supplemental care, the day nursery can offer to many parents and children a way of life more satisfying than would be possible in any other way. As such it should become a regular part of our social services to children, and worthy of both public and private support.

—MRS. GLENN B. JOHNSON, *Case Supervisor,*  
*Emergency Child Care Office, Cleveland, Ohio*

## Current Trends in Adoption\*

HENRIETTA L. GORDON

**H**OW have the exigencies of the war affected adoption practice? We put this question to twenty-five member agencies of the Child Welfare League of America. The answers, which form the basis of this paper, report that there are more children being born out of wedlock and these constitute more than half the children offered for adoption. In addition, we are told that in general the "*same old complications are intensified by the strains of the war.*"

### Shall She Give Up Her Child?

The unmarried mother is reported to be facing some changing personal and social conditions as she struggles with whether to give up or to keep her child. These are playing a determining role in her efforts to arrive at a plan.

"A change in attitude toward the child born out of wedlock by their own mothers and by the maternal grandparents."

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"The disruptions of family life tend to lessen questioning regarding the whereabouts of fathers."

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"Generally upset living conditions tend to minimize the importance of certain social standards."

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"The increased ability of women to assume financial responsibility for their children because they can earn more in war industries; they can get allotments from service men fathers; with a lower relief load, counties seem more willing to subsidize a boarding arrangement."

We are warned not to be blinded by what upon superficial examination may appear to be like "manna from heaven" sent to save the unmarried mother from the necessity to give up her child. Every child needs to be a part of his own family. Ties of blood are the roots of family stability. But every child needs also to be wanted and loved for himself. Will that be the lot of the child whose mother is not relinquishing him for adoption? In many situations great skill is required if the mother is to be helped to make a plan that is wise for herself and for her child.

Like every individual who needs help, the unmarried mother finds herself able to use help effectively when she feels free in her choice of a plan. Along with the practical limitations of her situation, she needs to weigh how much of a mother she can and

wants to be, and whether that is compatible with what her child needs in mothering and in family life. Social and economic pressures seriously influence her decision. As Julia Ann Bishop so aptly put it,†

"She must sustain not only her problem, but the emotions of her family—their shame, their rejection, their desire to punish or, at best, their grief and concern—as well as the traditional moral attitudes of the community and the legal, economic and social restrictions inherent in her situation."

But when her own family accepts her and her child, when fear that friends and neighbors will single her and the child out for pity or scorn is removed, when she is not overwhelmed by the problem of maintenance of her child, she still has to take into account her personal life. The decision to give up or keep her child must be based upon the girl's own attitude toward her motherhood and her feelings for this child. It is here that the personal attitudes of social workers have complicated the situation, as Miss Bishop further states,†

"There are those who would have her keep her baby, there are those who would have her give him up, but seldom are there any who are free enough of their own conflict to help her to come to a decision that represents her real feeling and her capacity to operate within the practical limitations of her world."

On this score there is some encouragement in one reply which tells that:

"There is a marked change in the attitude of social workers, which makes the unmarried girls feel more free to decide whether to surrender their babies for adoption. . . . There used to be a punishing attitude on the part of the superintendent (of the Maternity Home) toward girls proposing to give up their babies, which does not now exist and which has resulted in more and earlier releases of babies."

More mothers are keeping their children born out of wedlock. However, we are told that skillful help to the mother may mean more children released for adoption. For in many instances the decision to keep her child is no test of her real wish or capacity to be a mother. It may in truth be an evasion of the need to arrive at a more realistic plan.

"The number of parents and unmarried mothers who are keeping their children has definitely increased. We feel sure that ordinarily many of these children would have been released for adoption."

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"There is the large number of unmarried mothers, the fathers of whose children are overseas and, therefore, inaccessible to them. This circumstance often brings promises of marriage, false hopes of a relationship which never really existed. These mothers usually cannot really believe what they hope is true and are caught in a dilemma. Certainly this is no new problem, except as it is more prevalent and distance does veil reality on both sides."

\* Delivered at the New Jersey State Conference, November 27, 1944.

† Adoption Practice: Case Work with Parent, Child and Foster Parents. Child Welfare League of America, December 1941.



In one community which placed thirty babies during the first eight months of 1944, 68% of the natural fathers were in the service. It is so much easier to build up a fantasy of a possible ultimate marriage and the establishment of a home for the child where there is no need to face that possibility and its implications in the immediate present. Another factor which makes indecision possible is the greater ability of the unmarried mother to pay for the child's maintenance. Statements similar to the following, illustrating this point, were found in a number of the replies:

"Furthermore, with plentiful jobs available paying higher salaries or wages, the unmarried mother can often assume full financial responsibility for the care of her baby so that she is again not able to face realistically what it means to keep the child in continued boarding care."

This decision has been found not only with respect to plans for new-born babies. We are told that fewer older children are being referred for adoption because "there is less economic reason for surrender," not alone because parents pay for boarding care, but as one letter reads:

"With more income, I believe counties are *less concerned* about the care that children are receiving, since they are not having to participate in the support of these children."

For many years we have been saying that children need their own families and that no child should suffer separation from his own family because of lack of financial resources. Perhaps we need to add that it is so vital that children have a chance to belong, they should not be deprived of *that* because the resources of parents or others can be tapped for their maintenance.

This is not to deny the unmarried mother her inalienable parental rights to have her child and to plan for their future, but rather to re-emphasize the importance of skillful case work help so that the mother's decision will spell peace for herself and security for her child. Every placement agency and probably every institution numbers among its unhappiest children those who have never known the feeling of belonging, the security of being wanted, by their own or a substitute family. Because the mother never was able to or enabled to decide to keep or give up her child on the basis of how much of a mother she wants to be and can be, her child may have been deprived of his inalienable right to loving care. One executive sums this up:

"It seems to me, therefore, that unusual skill is required at this time in work with the unmarried mother to allow her to make her own real decision but to give her strength and support in facing what she wants for her child and what she can really offer. I believe that a decision to release a child for adoption responsibly made involves at this time a more clearcut

decision regarding the mother's feeling for the child than was true in many instances in the past."

The agency which reported an "... increase in requests for adoption of children born in wedlock because the father is now in service and they cannot provide for another child" may be in a better position to help these mothers and their children as workers are more aware of the part played in that decision by "the mother's feeling for the child."

Another old problem that is intensified affects the non-resident unmarried mother. Social workers have expressed themselves about unwarranted residence restrictions when a person needs help. But today when the needs of our war industry has forced large numbers of people to move from state to state, there is less excuse for services to be geographically restricted as though we were 48 different countries instead of one country composed of 48 states. It is significant that only one agency reported:

"We have an increasing number of non-resident mothers asking adoption. On this we differ in policy from most agencies. We have no policy against the non-resident."

### The Married "Unmarried" Mother

The problem of the married woman who wants to surrender her child of an extra-marital relationship has stirred considerable controversy. It presents a new complication with regard to a mother's right to relinquish her child for adoption. As several agencies reported:

"An increasing number of applicants are married women whose husbands are overseas and whose babies are by another man. They seem to have more guilt and trouble over this circumstance even than the usual unmarried mother and offer a more complex need for help. They are insistent that their husbands must not learn of this situation. Some are concerned to protect their marriage."

During the second half of 1944, the League had inquiries from several parts of the country asking for guidance with this problem. In addition to the complex social, ethical and moral issues there is the question of the legality of accepting the release of a child for adoption from the mother alone when there is a legal father—the mother's husband—who is not the natural father. The law declaring every child born during wedlock the legitimate child of the mother's husband unless the husband can prove otherwise, gives necessary protection to women and children. Under present conditions with husbands and wives separated for years, each living in such an emotionally charged atmosphere, a re-interpretation of the law may be necessary to insure the intended protection to parent and child, without unnecessarily jeopardizing the family unity it intended to safeguard. For the worker, too, deep emotions are

stirred that create a conflict between her personal and professional self. As one worker questioned, "Shall we be a party to fooling the husband?" The legal involvement is being attacked in several different ways, as was reported in the League's Bulletin.\* In some states the mother may declare her children illegitimate after presenting evidence of the husband's non-access over a sufficiently long period of time, and where possible, after the natural father has acknowledged paternity. She may then be free to surrender her child for adoption as any unmarried mother may, without obtaining consent from the absent husband. Others still insist that the husband must be given an opportunity to state his wishes in the matter. An answer to this complex problem, satisfactory to all involved, has not yet been written but there seems to be greater clarity about the purposes to be achieved.

#### The Children Available for Adoption

While a few agencies speak of few children for adoption because of the trend in the direction of mothers keeping children for reasons mentioned earlier, more reports tell of an increase in the numbers. One report mentions the almost overwhelming increase of 500 per cent. Others mention 20 to 50 per cent. From one agency we learned that a new state law requiring that adoptions be made by licensed agencies only, has increased the number of children for whom adoption plans were asked.

#### Infants Placed at Five to Six Months

We are told also that placement is being asked for younger infants than hitherto. Three major reasons are suggested:

"Maternity hospitals discharged mothers and babies sooner because of bed and staff shortages."

"Employment opportunities induce the unmarried mother to wish to leave the maternity home sooner," and

"Those who want to surrender their babies seem freer to do so and so arrive at a decision earlier than previously."

In this connection, too, is mentioned "the marked change in the attitude of social workers which makes the unmarried girls feel much more free to decide to surrender their babies."

Not only do more and younger children need to be planned for, but in so many instances no history can be gotten on the putative father or his family. This is not an altogether new, war-created problem. It is a challenging one. To be sure, in recent years we had had the benefit of improved psychological tests that predict a child's potentialities at an earlier age.

\* "A Wartime Adoption Problem," by Maud Morlock, Child Welfare League of America Bulletin, November 1944.

Agencies report that they would want a longer period to observe these children but the conviction of the value to the infant of as early a permanent placement as possible plus such "pressing realities as the shortage of boarding homes which must be freed for the use of incoming infants, and the mother's insistence to be released from responsibility," is influencing a trend toward placing infants in their adoption homes before the infant is six months of age, preferably five months.

This procedure is being followed: when a child is developing satisfactorily and the maternal history good, the child is placed if "the family that can meet the baby's needs is willing to take the baby with full knowledge of this limitation." It must be recognized that in the end "the responsibility for the decision to place must rest with the agency." Such sharing with the family is only valid if the agency assumes responsibility for saying in effect, "We believe it is all right to place this baby now." Perhaps agencies are finding it more possible to place these babies for adoption despite limited information regarding the paternal antecedents because, as they report, "In general the babies seem to be better physical and intellectual specimens." The background histories that are obtainable are reported to be of higher cultural levels than usual. In addition, the agency carries responsibility for a period of continued supervision of the adoption home, helping the family and child with problems in adjustment that inevitably arise.

#### Independent Placements

Greater concern is expressed for the welfare of those babies who are being placed "independently." The reports tell of an increase in the number of independent placements, particularly by the mother who can assume financial responsibilities. We all recognize this as an old problem now of decidedly greater magnitude. Three suggestions are offered for reducing it:

"More adequate interpretation as to how sound adoption practices, under good auspices, protect the mother, the child and the adoptive parents";

"An expansion of agency services to meet promptly the increased applications for service";

"Amending legislation to permit placement for adoption by licensed social agencies only."

In a number of states such legislation has been enacted. However, its effectiveness is limited because the child's own mother is exempt. Permitting a parent to select the home and place her own child for adoption, presumably in deference to her inalienable rights of care and custody of her child, in effect robs

her and her child of much needed protection. When the intention of the parent is explicitly and implicitly to relinquish all parental rights and obligations, including that of custody by surrender of her child, what inalienable right is violated by insuring skilled case work service? No layman exacts or is conceded the right to vaccinate his own child. Adoption involves a kind of psychological "amputation and grafting." Those who acknowledge case work as a special skill recognize that no untrained person can help the mother decide about giving up her child and actually carrying out that decision, select a fitting adoption home, prepare the adoptive parents for receiving the child, and help them over the bumps as they forge this new child-parent relationship. The inalienable rights of the child to health and happiness are often at stake.

Where the law does not provide for placement by the social agencies exclusively, there may be provisions for an investigation after the petition for adoption has been filed. This would include the independent placements. The replies call attention to the serious limitations of such a provision, in service to the mother, in the matching of child and home, and in the possibilities for helping the adoptive family. They tell, too, that since it is optional for the court to use the recommendations based on such investigations, all too frequently recommendations are rejected. One agency reported that the court decided counter to the recommendation in ten out of twelve situations.

### The Adoptive Parents

More families are wanting children for adoption than ever before. And as has been rather common experience in the past several years, there are many more applicants for children than there are children available. In general, a larger percentage of applicants fall in a group over 35 years of age and an appreciable number are over 40. These "older couples" express a greater urgency about getting children. The urgency is felt to represent a need to be assured a vital experience which time may deny them entirely. With the younger group, the likelihood of military service, with its natural uncertainties, "may suggest postponement of an experience which could still be theirs when peace is established."

A state-wide agency makes the interesting observation that newspaper publicity about the draft was reflected in the number of applications . . .

"If the story was about taking men over 38 or younger, our applications slowed down; if it was about not taking men over 30, there would be an increase." Perhaps, as one writer put it, "the war itself has made many people think more fully about values they want for themselves, and home and family have acquired meanings of particular significance."

While some agencies question the use of homes of couples over 40, others report that their policies and practices are being shaped by the realities of life of the people they serve. This is not viewed as a "lowering or raising of standards," it is facing life realistically.

The housing shortage is listed as a war-created problem affecting adoption. In some communities otherwise good homes are rejected for lack of adequate space for the child. We do not have sufficient information to critically examine this procedure. However, it may be that where housing shortage is community wide, the child who needs an adoption home will need to share such temporary deprivation with all the other children of that community. The most common war-created problem affecting applicants, as is to be expected, are the numbers of families where the husband has already joined or is expecting to join the Armed Forces. One agency reported that 62 per cent of their applicants are men in the Armed Forces. There seems to be a difference of opinion about the use of such homes. One executive wrote us:

"We like service people and have welcomed applications of those fairly permanently stationed (prospect of 18 months or so). The unstable quality of family life in war time, of course, has made for expected, and unexpected, problems."

The importance of insuring that the child will become a part of the family before the father leaves is emphasized in one reply which reads:

"We have not felt that we could place a child on an adoptive basis in a home in which the man has left for service or was likely to leave before the child could become truly a part of the family group."

Some complications have arisen when unanticipated changes of residence occurred after the placement of a child. Here the agency has been tested to insure help to the family and child with their developing relationship until legal adoption establishes the permanence of that relationship. This problem of residence affects not only families where the man is in service but also those whose moves are necessitated by their employment situation. One agency states its policy clearly:

"The geographical problem is always with us and, of course, complicated by the present conditions of many people moving about because of exigencies of the war. We do insist that our applicants live within the territory covered by our agency long enough for us to do an adequate home study of both parents and probably to supervise during the year's probation the agency requires. There might possibly be an occasional exception to this."

As is natural under circumstances of generally improved economic status, better economic status of applicants is noted. While this may seem relatively unimportant, it is of especial significance as it affects Negro children. Homes of adequate income have been scarce for this group of children. With more



Negro homes of adequate income available, that group of generally deprived citizens can share more fully in the advantages which adoption brings to families and to children.

### Reduction Period of Supervision

In the past several years agencies have at times asked the court to reduce this period between placement and legal adoption. Reducing the period of supervision is for the protection of the child and parents against the insecurity of a prolonged postponement of final legalization of the adoption because the father is called to service before the agreed trial period had elapsed. This expedient procedure is accepted distinctly as a temporary war-emergency measure, and is permitted only in such situations as give satisfactory evidence that stable family ties have been achieved.

### Shortage of Personnel

The adoption agencies are not exempt from the problems which all social agencies are facing, notably staff shortages and shortage of boarding homes for temporary placement and study of the child prior to placement in the adoption home. This causes "slowness in getting babies into adoptive homes . . . and can be charged to the war."

Every wartime problem has its roots in our peacetime program and planning. Even current staff shortage and lack of boarding homes is traceable to pre-war understaffing, lack of awareness of the importance of a trained staff. The shortage of boarding homes is traceable to inadequate programs of interpretation and unrealistic attitudes about board rates. The current concern about standards of service in the face of these difficulties gives promise for a brighter future for children who need adoption.

### Affairs of Children

(Continued from page 7)

"pushed around" a bit by children and the adult who is not important enough to some child to be treated that way is unfortunate. He has missed a great deal but of course may never know it!

### Self Realization through Balanced Relationships

When an adult and child are able to establish a balanced relationship something unusual happens to both of them. The balance is achieved when each one is wanted for his own sake. When an adult is being kind to children and doing things for them and taking care of them they may all have some satisfaction but neither attains the self realization that comes through the mutual give and take of a relationship. That condition makes self respect possible and eliminates the loneliness of living which comes when one doubts his real importance to any one. In the cases cited earlier there was nothing remarkable but the reason they

were given was that they worked because this balance was present in each case. A relationship has vitality and works when the give and take are balanced. The give and take may be quite different. This eliminates any patronizing, any need for appreciation, and any tendency on the part of the adult to think of the child as a small inferior being instead of one whose rights and responsibilities are equal to his own. Adults have not always used their superior strength to best advantage for children and this has left children with a great need to balance the account by building up a resistance of equal strength thereby creating some of the most difficult problems of the adult child relationship whether between parents and children or in other relationships. We value our democratic ideas and our freedom to carry them out but are we always sure that democratic thinking permeates the way in which adults relate to children. It is in those living experiences whether they are great or small that children learn the ideas we expect to find mysteriously full grown when they are of mature age. In looking ahead to the responsibility the next generation will have to take for creating a world that can be at peace with itself our responsibility for giving leadership in the establishment of relationships between adults and children in a truly democratic way cannot be over emphasized. That is surely where democracy is thoroughly learned and absorbed and taken into one's bones so it can operate unconsciously as well as consciously. This provides a surer and broader base for sane living and minimizes the child's need for getting even with society. The worker's help in all of this is most important for the children who depend on her for planning.

### The Worker Expands Her Thinking

When a child has lost his birthright in losing his own home he challenges his agency and worker to compensate as fully as possible for his loss although he may never put this into words. In recognizing needs that are not met for some children in the usual categories of care the worker will discover that she must go exploring and tap the reservoir of concerned adults who may be interested in providing permanent relationships for children in which they can find themselves and their value. These adults may offer adoption to children not usually considered or free homes without commitment to adoption, or friendships that supplement socially or culturally the life of a child and help to give it greater meaning. Some of these people children may find for themselves but most of them would never know each other without the help of the worker who could see the potentiality on each side. Each child successfully related to adults who take over all or part of the responsibility for him because they want him and he wants them is well on his way to "fortune." She learns that she is most successful when through her efforts a child no longer needs her because he has found a relationship in which he can more truly and adequately be himself and find his place in the community of which he is a part.

## BOOK NOTE

FEE CHARGING IN A FAMILY AGENCY, Family Welfare Association of America, N. Y., 1944. 24 pp. Price 30 cents.

This pamphlet is both thought provoking and challenging. Its whole theme can be summed up on what Miss Penn says in her article, "It is to be expected that any new experience if it is to have growth value must of necessity disturb the known experience and cause it to reorganize before it can achieve a new integration." Charging fees to clients in a social agency is new, is disturbing both to the client and to the case worker. Adjustments of many sorts must be made on both sides.

Fee charging by an agency supported by voluntary funds is thought of by most people and particularly by the lay public as a means of augmenting the income of the agency. It is comforting to note in this pamphlet that no emphasis is placed upon this aspect of it, and that no considerable income to the agency is anticipated as a result of the practice. The two main reasons set forth to justify the charging of fees to clients are: First, as emphasized in Miss Penn's paper, therapeutic, and second, as emphasized in Miss Taggart's paper, while she emphasizes its effect upon the relationship of the client, also points out that case work in a family agency has heretofore been available only to clients of low economic status; that many people in the higher income bracket also have family problems with which they are unable to cope and for the solution of which they need professional assistance. Yet people in this group have hesitated to seek or accept professional assistance from a social agency for which they do not pay.

Agencies which have an established sliding fee scale for their service available to people of all classes find it no longer is considered to be a stigma to seek guidance and help from them any more than it is to seek help from a doctor who maintains a private practice.

Much has been said by the uninformed public, and especially during emergency relief days, condemning the social agency for fostering a feeling of dependency on the part of its clients. The fact that this is an unfair criticism is beside the point. Mr. Berkowitz points out that the client who pays a fee, no matter how small, can retain his self respect and his feeling of independence. Both articles emphasize that the client will have more respect for and will value more highly those interviews and that professional consultation if he feels that he is paying something for them.

Miss Penn points out an interesting reaction on the

part of the case worker who is charging the fee. She cannot help but feel more conscientious about giving her best to the client who is paying for her services and that while it may serve to build up in the clients mind more respect for her professional help, it places upon the case worker a feeling of greater responsibility toward that client.

The time element is also important. Some clients waste many interviews in their resistance to case work help. When they are paying for it, they will waste less of their own time and less of the case worker's.

The idea of fee charging to clients is being considered by case workers in other fields, notably child welfare. Mothers wanting day care, others wanting foster home placement temporarily for their children are now willing and able to share the responsibility of the cost of this service. People who wish to adopt a baby are more than willing to pay for the costs in order to get one.

Charging of fees to clients never will be of great value as an important source of income but it can have a tremendous value both to clients and case workers in their relationship to each other and in a more effectual and satisfactory conclusion of those relationships to the best interest of the client. These articles point out that there is a definite need for case work among people who are able to pay, and wish to pay for the service.

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### "Institutions Serving Children"

THE demand for "Institutions Serving Children," by Howard W. Hopkirk, exhausted the first printing within six months after publication. A second printing now is available.

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